



## Which Bible Translation is Best?

### PREFACE

Thank you for taking the time to read this instruction, I pray that the Ruach Ha'Kodesh (Holy Spirit) is present with you as you read and check with you own Bible its contents. The contents of this instruction are based entirely on God's word the Bible, to challenge your current beliefs in the spirit of love that Yeshua spoke of in John 13:35.

Please remember that I have no religious affiliation other than to Yeshua Ha'Mashiach and Almighty God that sent Him, therefore I am bound by the Ruach and not by a manmade religious practice or tradition, assuring you that I have no ulterior motive other than the spreading of the truth that can only be found in Almighty God's word via His gift to us all... the Bible. I pray that this instruction will help you in your quest for truth.

When we begin to study the word of Almighty God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob it is necessary to bear in mind our dedication to the obedience of His Law (Torah) as, if we do not shema (Hear and Obey) God will not hear our prayers.

Proverbs 28:9 KJV He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.

*Numbers 6:24-26*

Amid the plethora of Bible translations that are available to us today in the English tongue there has been and continues to be much debate as to which translation is the most accurate for us today. There are many Bible scholars that argue for or against the accuracy of the texts contained within each version.

There are many issues that can arise between translations for the term “lost in translation” is so profound when it comes to the early Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek texts. It is a fact that most of the early original translations have been subsequently “revised” over the millennia for example, the authorised version of the King James bible has itself received no less than five revisions since it was first published in 1611. The question we must ask ourselves is “if the Bible we use today is the true inspired word of Almighty God, why do we need so many revisions?”

We are aware of the scripture found at 2 Timothy 3:16-17 KJV *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: <sup>17</sup> That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”* I find this statement by Sha’ul to be absolute truth however, I also believe that Sha’ul is applying this solely to the TaNaKh (Hebrew scriptures) for the Brit Ha’Dashah (New Testament [NT]) as we know it, was not available when Sha’ul was spreading the Gospel. The NT can be broken down into sections thus:

Book	Description
Matthew Mark Luke	These are the ‘synoptic’ gospels that give an account of the genealogy and 70-week ministry of the son of Almighty God, Yeshua. They recall the words that the master Yeshua spoke and they identify that Yeshua is indeed the Mashiach.
John	The account of Yochanan (John) is a little different to the synoptic gospels as he concentrates more on the qualifications and scriptural evidence from the Hebrew scriptures concerning the master Yeshua and he pulls no punches doing so. It is believed by many scholars that John’s account was originally written in Hebrew.
Acts	Written by Luke this portion recounts the spreading of the Gospel by the Apostles but mostly focuses on the ministry of Sha’ul. It informs us of the situations that were being faced by the members of “The Way” and the opposition that was being propagated and executed by the religious and pagan systems of the day. We can learn much from Luke’s words in Acts.
Romans 1 & 2 Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians 1 & 2 Thessalonians 1 & 2 Timothy Titus Philemon	These are the epistles (letters) written by Sha’ul to the various congregations in Asia Minor and Rome that he had gathered together on his Apostolic travels, obviously the letters to Timothy, Titus and Philemon are personal letters to the individuals that bear their name. These letters show encouragement and opposition that was being faced by these early ecclesiae (congregations).  These letters are the writings that Kefa (Simon Peter) spoke of in 2Peter 3:16. Even in the days of the Apostle Sha’ul’s his writings were being misunderstood by those who viewed them through a Hellenistic filter instead of the Hebrew that Sha’ul was using. But that is another story.

Hebrews	This book was written by an unknown author, some ascribe the writing to Sha'ul as it closely resembles his style however, this cannot be substantiated as the author is not identified although the author is clearly a Hebrew that was well versed in the TaNaKh just as Sha'ul was. This in no way detracts from its message and is rightfully placed in the canon.
James	James (Ya'akov or Jacob) was the son of Joseph and Miriam making him the half-brother of Yeshua. Like Sha'ul he was a devout Hebrew, and his epistle shows this in vivid relief. It is James that highlights the importance of producing fine fruit that is commensurate with the theme of both TaNaKh and Brit ha'Dashah and brings harmony to the scriptures.
1 & 2 Peter	Peter or Kefa is known as the most prominent Apostles, although he is identified as being given the keys of heaven and earth he is erroneously understood as being the head of the Ecclesia which history proves that he was not as Ya'akov, known as the "Just" was the head of the Ecclesia in Jerusalem until he was martyred in the persecution. Both 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> Peter are highly valued contributions to the Brit Ha'Dashah, they cover all things that Yeshua expected of his followers. To me Kefa was just an ordinary man like us all, he got so many things wrong but his heart, like all those that follow the Master Yeshua posses. Whenever he was corrected, he understood and made the adjustments necessary in his life which enabled him, like us, to draw ever closer to our wonderful loving Abba,
1, 2 & 3 John	<p>These letters may have been a circulars sent to believers in the area around Ephesus as the letters do not mention any individuals by name, nor is there any indication that it was written for one specific fellowship.</p> <p>You can always rely in John to be straightforward and accurate with all his writings, this is proved by Yeshua selecting him to writ the account of the apocalypse at the end of days. Form his writings you get the impression of his burning desire for the gospels.</p>
Jude	<p>The Epistle of Y'hudah, often shortened to Jude, is the penultimate book of the New Testament and is attributed to Jude, the servant of Jesus and the brother of James the Just.</p> <p>Both Y'hudah and Ya'akov were the half-brothers of the Mashiach Yeshua.</p> <p>Greetings (1,2)  Judgment of false teachers certain (3-16)  Michael's dispute with the Devil (9)  Enoch's prophecy (14,15)  Keep yourselves in God's love (17-23)  Ascribing glory to God (24,25)</p>
Revelation	This book is unique in all the books of the canon, being inspired by Yeshua himself he used the Apostle John to record everything that was revealed to him by Yeshua. It is most certainly not the easiest

	<p>book in the canon to read as one requires a sound understanding of the TaNaKh to gain the picture of what is happening just as Daniel and his counterpart Ezekiel recorded their apocryphal visions. What makes Revelation even more difficult to understand is that it is not written in a chronological order. There is much symbolism in this most important book and one must work hard and pray for the Ruach ha’Kodesh to gain insight. There has much been written about the contents of this book and it is partially uncovered but there is still much to learn and I believe that some of the visions that John received on Patmos will not be revealed until Yeshua returns although many have speculated over the millennia about the world’s end it will not happen until all the prophecies have come to pass.</p>
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Finding the most accurate Bible version in this day and age is quite a task. As you are probably aware, the original texts that were penned in the latter 1<sup>st</sup> century have been lost or disintegrated over time leaving only copies from the original texts available to us. Below is a table showing the earliest manuscripts that are currently available. The fact is that the likelihood of stumbling upon a manuscript written by any of the Apostles is extremely remote and it is safe to assume that all translations we possess today have been subject to misinterpretation, either by accident or purposefully and this is why it becomes necessary to test all things. 1Thessalonians 5:21.

MANUSCRIPT	PASSAGES	DATE	DATE OF MANUSCRIPT	APPROXIMATE TIME SPAN
<b>P<sup>52</sup> (John Rylands Fragment)</b>	<i>John 18.31-33; 37-38</i>	~96 AD	~125 AD	~29 years
<b>P<sup>90</sup> (Oxyrhynchus)</b>	<i>John 18.36-19.7</i>	~96 AD	~150-200 AD	~50-100 years
<b>P<sup>104</sup> (Oxyrhynchus)</b>	<i>Matthew 21.34-37, 43, 45</i>	~60-65 AD	~150-200 AD	~90-140 years
<b>P98 (IFAO)</b>	<i>Revelation 1.13-2.1</i>	~90 AD	~150-200 AD	~50-100 years
<b>P<sup>46</sup> (Chester Beatty Papyrus)</b>	<i>Romans 5.17-6.3, 5-14; 8.15-25, 27-35; 10.1-11.22, 24-33, 35; 16.1-23, 25-27; Hebrews; 1 &amp; 2 Corinthians; Ephesians; Galatians; Philippians; Colossians; 1 Thessalonians 1.1, 9-10; 2.1-3; 5.5-9, 23-28</i>	50’s-70’s AD	~200 AD	~150 years
<b>P<sup>66</sup> (Bodmer Papyrus)</b>	<i>John 1.1-6.11, 6.35-14.26; fragment of 14.29-21.9</i>	70’s AD	~200 AD	~130 years
<b>P<sup>67</sup></b>	<i>Matthew 3.9, 15; 5.20-22; 25-28</i>	~60-65 AD	~200 AD	~140 years

## **Translation History**

Up until the Wycliffe Bible of 1388 all Bibles were in control of the Catholic church. The Catholic Church kept strict control of the Bible, only those authorised and qualified by the (Roman) Catholic Church were allowed to read from the Holy Scriptures. Most of the laity at the time could not read or write in their native tongue let alone read the Latin text.

This situation changed when, in 1388 John Wycliffe translated the Latin Vulgate into Middle English (Mostly Anglo Saxon). Wycliffe was the father of the English translation league which frustrated the Catholic Church who considered him an anathema. The Wycliffe Bible was followed 147 years later by the Coverdale Bible in 1535 using the Masoretic Text, the Greek New Testament of Erasmus (Textus Receptus), Vulgate, and German and Swiss-German Bibles (Luther Bible, Zürich Bible and Leo Jud's Bible) and other Bible translations followed. (*See table below*).

Bible Version	Abbr	Language	Date	Translation Text(s)
Matthew's Bible		Early Modern English	1537	Masoretic Text, the Greek New Testament of Erasmus, the Vulgate, the Luther Bible, and a 1535
Great Bible		Early Modern English	1539	Masoretic Text, Greek New Testament of Erasmus, the Vulgate, and the Luther Bible.
Taverner's Bible		Early Modern English	1539	Masoretic Text, Greek New Testament of Erasmus, the Vulgate, and the Luther Bible.
Geneva Bible	GEN	Early Modern English	1557 (NT) 1560 (complete Bible)	Masoretic Text, Textus Receptus
Bishops' Bible		Early Modern English	1568	Masoretic Text, Textus Receptus
Douay–Rheims Bible	DRB	Early Modern English	1582 (NT)	Latin, Greek and Hebrew manuscripts.
Douay–Rheims Bible	DRB	Early Modern English	1609–1610 (OT)	
King James Version (a.k.a. the Authorized Version)	KJV	Early Modern English	1611, 1769	Masoretic Text, Textus Receptus, Tyndale 1526 NT, some Erasmus manuscripts, and Bezae 1598 TR.

## **Translation Considerations**

All these early English Bibles have been produced with much care and consideration in their translation and we should be grateful for those scholars that painstakingly scanned over all the manuscripts available at that time, the table above shows the various translations up to the Authorised King James Version of 1611 which has become arguably the standard English Bible.

When researching these versions, we must remember that, although the Elizabethan English that they use gives the text a certain romantic gravitas, the English language has changed over the millennia and some of the texts of these early translations are difficult for some to understand, for example, how would you explain this statement to one whose first language is not English - *“lo, there thou hast that is thine”* Mat 25:25 KJV? Or this text...

*“But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 19:14 KJV.* In Early Modern English the word “Suffer” means “allow”. The KJV also mentions “charity” 28 times in 24 verses of the New Testament, the actual meaning of this word is not how we understand it in today’s English, in 1611 the word “charity” meant “love”. How would you read *“And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing...”* James 2:3 KJV? There are many other examples we could use but I think you will recognise the comprehension difficulty.

We also have to consider that those early translators lived in a much different world than we do today, they had a totally different mindset than what their counterparts of today possess. Since 1611 there has been many other manuscripts and fragments that have been discovered which predate those used in these latter medieval translations and, we know by scripture that, as we move closer to the return of Yeshua there will be many more apocalypses in store as the Ruach Ha’Kodesh reveals to us in a progressive manner. Taking all this into consideration, these early translations are as still as valid today as they were when they were first published so never dismiss them as they are the word of Almighty God when all said and done.

So, what about the more recent translations? How do these compare to the older translations?

It is a fact that, from the later “revised” editions there is a certain hostility within the Christian world, there is a society that energetically press for the use of the Authorised King James translation over all other translations, there are so many conspiracy theories of the changing of words to the removal of complete verses. The King James Only movement venomously protect the 1611 translation and consider it as the only inerrant translation, this stance is extremely dangerous in a hermeneutical sense. We must understand that, when these early translations were published, they still supported many catechisms of the Catholic Church such as the pagan doctrines of the immortal soul, the trinity and eternal torture in hellfire and many more extra Biblical practices that crept into Christendom from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE onwards. The events of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, in my opinion are wrongly worded, this event would be better described as the “Catholic Reformation” rather than the “Protestant Reformation”.

When we walk into many mainstream “Protestant” churches you will find it difficult to discern any difference between the two churches.

Concerning these conspiracy theories there are three main areas we must consider:

1. In removing/changing certain words or verses are they removing them in order to change what Yeshua and the Apostles taught?
2. Are they removing the interpolated words and verses that were added to these older translations in order to support the extrabiblical pagan doctrines such as the trinity doctrine, hellfire and the immortal soul doctrine that were added?”
3. Are the new translations simply bringing the text of these earlier translations into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and correcting doctrinal errors that were prevalent in those earlier versions?



We should not be too concerned with minor word changes known as textual variants between different translations, small changes that do not alter the overall context of the verse as in the case of using words that are the modern equivalent of the middle English should not be considered detrimental to the message however, where the change effects the doctrinal teaching, these changes should always be investigated. This is where the use of different translations, along with the Ruach Ha’Kodesh can bring clarity to the doctrinal question. The general rule of thumb I use is that, if the change does not reflect the contextual harmony of the message of both the TaNaKh or the Brit Ha’Dashah then I would consider the verse in error irrespective of the translation or its age.

In making a decision as to which Bible version we should use we should consider the religious climate of the time that a particular translation was made, all translations, irrespective of their history, suffer from the religious fervour of the time that they were translated. It would be fair to say that every translator has a preconception of what the Bible should teach and this becomes apparent in the choice of words they use.

Many Hebrew and Greek word’s do not have an equivalent English description that is comparable with the meaning, to the translators it was like trying to describe a colour to a blind person so, in order to provide a seemingly logical continuation the inserted what they considered to be the most accurate translation, in other words, they made things up.

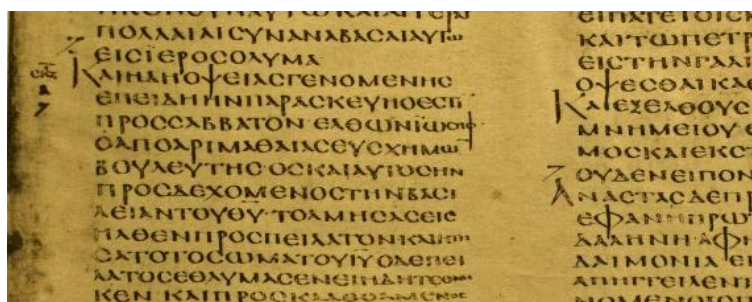
There are also instances where a particular denomination insists on a change in the text in order to support a particular doctrine, this type of translation is the most dangerous as it can radically change the message of God’s word. This can be a simple punctuation mark set in the wrong place up to a complete interpolation as in the well-known Johannine Comma of 1John 5: 7, 8 that is present in the Authorised KJV and all subsequent KJV revisions.

Below is the Greek Byzantine text of 1John 5: 7,8 with Strong’s numbers.

1 John 5:7 Greek NT BYZ+  
 ΟΤΙ<sup>G3754</sup> ΤΡΕΙΣ<sup>G5140</sup> ΕΙΣΙΝ<sup>G1510</sup> ΟΙ<sup>G3588</sup> ΜΑΡΤΥΡΟΥΝΤΕΣ<sup>G3140</sup>  
 1 John 5:8 Greek NT BYZ+  
 ΤΟ<sup>G3588</sup> ΠΝΕΥΜΑ<sup>G4151</sup> ΚΑΙ<sup>G2532</sup> ΤΟ<sup>G3588</sup> ΥΔΩΡ<sup>G5204</sup> ΚΑΙ<sup>G2532</sup> ΤΟ<sup>G3588</sup> ΑΙΜΑ<sup>G129</sup> ΚΑΙ<sup>G2532</sup> ΟΙ<sup>G3588</sup>  
 ΤΡΕΙΣ<sup>G5140</sup> ΕΙΣ<sup>G1519</sup> ΤΟ<sup>G3588</sup> ΕΝ<sup>G1520</sup> ΕΙΣΙΝ<sup>G1510</sup>

This early (4<sup>th</sup> Century) Greek text clearly shows the omission of the added text.

Another point to consider is that the Greek text in all the papyri, scroll and codex versions are written with no spaces or punctuation marks, any punctuations in the translations we have today have been inserted by the translators in an attempt to aid understanding of those who are not familiar with koine Greek, this obviously leads to misinterpretations such as in Luke 23:43 KJV



*“And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.”*

By errantly placing the comma between “thee” and “To” the context of this verse is dramatically changed. We know that Yeshua, after his death, was dead for 3 days and 3 nights because the scriptures tell us he was. If we take Luke 23:43 as written there is an obvious discrepancy. If there is a need to include punctuation then it would have been more accurate thus:

*“And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee To day, shalt thou be with me in paradise.”*

This would harmonise this verse with the rest of the scriptures that pertain to the crucifixion, I feel sure you will agree.

In contrast to the above example the account of the woman found in adultery (John 8:1 – 11) is not found in the earliest Greek manuscripts and is believed by scholars to be an interpolation however, this text is in harmony with the theme of the Brit Ha'Dashah and therefore is a fine example of an addition that does not detract from the gospel, in fact, it would be reasonable to assume, from what we know about Yeshua from the scriptures, that Yeshua could possibly have done what is suggested therefor, although it is recognised as an interpolation there are no issues that arise by its insertion into the text.

## **Conclusion**

In short there is no Bible that can be clearly identified as the best translation as all translations have their textual variants and many older translations have undergone revision(s) in order to address shortfalls in the previous texts. Every time I study God's word, I will use several translations that usually include the Strong's numbers for the Greek and Hebrew word clarifications.

I find that the Bible is most easily understood by the use of the Hebrew TaNaKh as this Hebrew section has been vehemently protected by God's chosen people and has not suffered the alterations that has plagued the Brit Ha'Dashah throughout the millennia. It is a fact that, in the first century, Yeshua and all his Apostles and disciples only had the TaNaKh at their disposal, Yeshua and Sha'ul taught from the TaNaKh, they did not have the Brit Ha'Dashah like we do today.

Concerning the Brit Ha'Dashah (the 27-book New Testament) was first formally canonized during the councils of Hippo (393) and Carthage (397) in North Africa. Pope Innocent I ratified the same canon in 405, but it is probable that a Council in Rome in 382 under Pope Damasus I gave the same list first.

There is much speculation concerning the dates of the actual publication of the individual gospels, epistles and accounts. With the completion of Yeshua's revelation to the Apostle John around 95CE it would be safe to assume that the Brit Ha'Dashah would not be available prior to this date.

There can be no doubt that the Brit Ha'Dashah is the most questioned and contended section of the entire Bible and I feel I must make this point absolutely clear, putting all speculation aside the Brit Ha'Dashah, in its entirety, is in perfect harmony with the TaNaKh



form which it draws its existence. There is not one sentence or word in its entirety that is in contention with the TaNaKh. The Apostle Sha'ul (Paul) taught all the early messianic Jews that they must keep the Torah as given to Moshe. Most, if not all Christendom believe that the Apostle Paul, a dedicated rabbinic Jew converted to Christianity, this is totally incorrect thinking, Paul remained a "Hebrew of Hebrews from the tribe of Benjamin" all his life. (Philippians 3:5). He kept all the feasts and taught his followers to keep the Torah of Moshe just as his master Yeshua did.

Should we all convert to Judaism in order to follow Yeshua? No, the followers of Pharisaic Judaism both then and now follow two torah's, the torah as given to Moshe and their "Oral" torah which they claim to have been handed down through generation to generation verbally until the second temple was destroyed by Titus in 70CE. With the destruction of the temple the Sadducees found themselves out of a job which left the Pharisees as the main Jewish religion but they were fearful that their oral torah would be lost so they decided to compile the traditions of the oral torah into a work that became known as the Mishnah that was compiled between 200–220 CE by Rabbi Yehudah haNasi, and the Gemara, a series of running commentaries and debates concerning the Mishnah, which together form two Talmud variations, Babylon and Jerusalem, these represent the preeminent text of Rabbinic Judaism. It is this "Oral" torah that was the target of Yeshua and Paul's attacks and not the "Written" torah that was given to Moshe and kept so perfectly by Yeshua. Mark 7: 6, 7, 9, 13; Matthew 15:3; Ephesians 4:14.

The Pharisaic Jewish leaders of Yeshua's day hated the message of Yeshua and his followers with a burning passion, they were ready to employ any means to silence those that were to expose their false teachings and traditions of the Pharisaic forefathers. Matthew 15:1 – 9. It certainly would not surprise me if these Pharisaic rabbis were in collusion with those "early church fathers" in the spreading false rumours that Yeshua and Paul were against the Written torah of Moshe.

If someone prefers one translation over another, we should not criticise their decision, remember, having a Bible is better than no Bible at all, whichever translation that might be. In this, as in many other things, let us not cause our brother to stumble, whichever Bible translation we prefer is always a matter of personal choice, it is not a competition as a competitive spirit is always likely to cause divisions and we must avoid contentions at all cost. Proverbs 17:14; Hebrews 12:14; Romans 12:18.

We must never underestimate the incomprehensible power of the word of Almighty God, there are those that have made the study of His word their lifelong ambition which is commendable however, we must also remember that, due to the fall, all these people are imperfect humans and, as such their translations are susceptible to their personal interpretation which is likely to be bias to their particular denomination, this is an inescapable fact. I believe it would be reasonable to assume that many, if not all these early translators have a dispensational belief which inevitably reflects in their translations, I doubt very much that any of the early translators of God's word were torah observant followers that were obedient to His mitzvot.

In the world of statistics the sample rate is directly proportional to the accuracy of the final result, in other words, the more samples we take the more accurate the results will be, for example, a photograph taken with a 32 megapixel camera would result in a much higher definition photograph when compared to a 3 megapixel camera so it would be reasonable to

*Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers. Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. **2 Timothy 2:14-15 KJV.***

assume that, along with the Ruach Ha’Kodesh, the more Bible transitions we employ in our quest for truth the more accurate the outcome is likely to be. This is what will enable us in “rightly dividing the word of truth”. We do well to remember the words of caution as spoken by Sha’ul to the Colossian congregations... *“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”* Colossians 2:8 KJV

I hope that this short guide has helped you to understand the advantage of being able to examine the many different translations of God's word and why preferring one translation above another limits your ability to fully grasp the truth. To those who support the "King James only" movement I would say that if you choose to follow this idea then it is your choice to do so however, it would be wrong to oppose other translations that are equally as valid as the KJV.

Proverbs 10:19; 17:27, 28; Ecclesiastes 3:7; James 1:26.

Many of us today have electronic devices that provide a wonderful aid to our study of God's word. I can personally recommend "e-Sword" which is an excellent study aid with many modules that can be freely downloaded from this excellent free program that will allow you to study and compare many different translations, some modules have the Strong's numbers. There are also Bible dictionaries, concordances and devotionals to assist you which are also free to download and use.

<https://www.e-sword.net/>

Shalom.

## GLOSSARY

- **YHVH [ יהוה ]** The personal Name of Almighty God. Y<sub>e</sub>H<sup>o</sup>V<sub>a</sub>H.
- **Yehoshua (Yeshua)** The personal name of Almighty God's son. (Modern: Jesus).
- **Ruach Ha'Kodesh** Yehovah's motive force. (Holy Spirit).
- **Kohan Gadol** High Priest.
- **Shaúl** Saul (Paul).
- **Israel** The nation comprising the 12 tribes of Jacob (Israel) including people of the nations grafted into Israel.
- **Gentile** Any person that does not follow the Abrahamic Religion (Pagan).
- **Tanakh** The books of the Hebrew scriptures. (Old Testament).
- **B'rit HaDashah** The Renewed Covenant. (New Testament)
- **Torah** The instructions or laws given to the Israelite Nation by Yehovah to Moses.
- **Oral Torah** The additional instructions added by the Pharisaic (Rabbinic) Jews which form the basis of the Mishnah and other Jewish religious books.
- **Gospel** Good News.
- **Christendom** All religions that profess belief in Jesus Christ.
- **Apostolic Fathers** The group of gentiles that directed the formation of the early church after the last apostle (John) died.